

*London
Lancaster
Philadelphia*

A BIT A TALK

BETWEEN

Sam Slack an Jonas Bradbery,

ABAGHT

London

D—T—N BOOARD,
SMELLIN BOTTLES, MUCK HEEAPS,
SLAP HOILS,
AN UTHER NESESARIES A LIFE,
An Summat Beside.

London



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A BIT A TALK.

SAM: Nah, Joonas lad, ha ar ta? Why ha'v not seen the this munth a Sundays hardley. An pray the ha's t'wife an all t'bairns gettin on?

JOONAS: Why lad, ha'm midlin, an ha think t'wife an t'bairns is all t'reight end up an maath whooal just nah, but ar Jomima Jane's hed t'meesles varry bad, en ha beleeve we shud a lost her if it hedent a been for owd Nanney Snuffup, for shu told us ta get sum opadildock tea, en it set her up cumpleatly, but it left her wi a tuch a t'lumbago in her ankle, an it maks her woak as if shu wor whooal-fooited, but t'wife thinks shu'l sooin be reight if shu nobbut taks plenty a brimstone en trakle, as it's a good thing for t'worms. As for mesen, ha'v been thru hooam a bit, furst ta won place en then anuther, while ha'd varry neer gotten nock'd off a t'stage a life; won chap hed t'impidence ta ax me if ha worent a church-yard desarter, an wor woakin abaght ta cheeat t'saxton, en sooa ha thowt it wor time ta cum hooam, or ha shud happen be deecin in a furrin land, sooa ha cum, es ha dident beleeve e me clooase cumin withaght me, an ha'm livin e t'owd place: mun, ha'm fond a D—t—n.

SAM: Then it seems tha's larnt sooa much e the travels, tha'l want ta gooa na moor in a hurry, ha rekon. Tha'l be wurkin e sum a t'coil pits e t'nabrood a D—t—n, ar ta?

JOONAS: Ah lad, tha sees ha ews'd ta work here befoor, an ha wor fond a t'place, en ha cud allas mak as much as ed get me salt ta me meight, en wi beein a good workman ha sooin got on under Squire Trump, en a trump he is; he's a rare good mester, but he's sich a blade for bloin us up. Ha think sumetimes he'd just suit em e Paris, nah ther withaght gas, for he'd sooin blo a baloon up: but then tha knows t'wind sooin sattles, en then all's reight, for he can't be bloin all on end, an varry often wen he's dun bloin us up, he gies us a blo aght, an thes noa lack a stumak-linein goin off ha'l assure the. Tha sees he's been a poor lad hissen, en happen beecin same as thee an me, gotten his supper at brekfast time becos it wor a bad thing ta gooa ta bed on—sooa he saved his supper an kept t'neetmare away.

SAM : Wa lad, ha'm pleasured thar dooin weel, en ha hooap tha'l continue ta do t'same. Nah tha sees wi me livin so much abroad, ha'v ommost forgotten t'places raand abaght here. Ha ew's'd ta kno a bit abaght M—p—l—ll wen owd Billy Moush wor t'mester a t'mint, an Jacky G—— wor t'vicer a S—n—oss, an that's a long while sin; en wi me livin e t'city a Pogmoor sa long, an ther bein noa submareen cable between t'places, ha'v heard varry little abaght it, an tha sees wi me bein wot they call a filosefist en skyologist, ha'v hed a deal a work wi makin sientifick observations all raand t'wapentack, an ha nobbut landed e t'Owd Mill warf t'neet befoor last, abaght two o'clock e t'mornin. Nah ha rekon things el be oltered a deaal booath e D—t—n an e M—p—l—ll sin ha lived there, en that'l be abaght twenty year sin.

JOONAS : Oltered tha thowt; why mun, tha'd hardley kno t'place nah. Tha knew whear t'owd slap-hoil wor e D—t—n, why mun, that's all filled up nah, en a bran new pump stuck e t'same plase, en it's a queer stick anole. Tha'd be cap'd if ta heeard a jackass toak, but tha'd be war cap'd if ta heeard a pump toak,—but its nooan sa long sin ar pump held a conversashun wi Tommy Dodd, en tha ma kno it ed been stood dry-maath mency a week, an Tommy wor all t'chap at ivver simpathised wi it—poor thing;—an it teld Tommy wen he wor leavin it, it ed a thank'd him be hevin a good roorin baght, but it hedent a drop a watter abaght it, but if Tommy Dodd did nowt else he wakened em up e D—t—n, en t'pump sooin got summat ta drink, en it ad feel varry refreshin nooa daght, as it ad ed nowt ta do but ta smell for mency a week, for tha sees thear wor a perfewmery 'stablishment just opposite, whear they manefaktered essence a rag-tag en Otto-a-rouses en uther bewteful cumpounds; an wen thear wor owt ta do at t'church, fooaks ew's'd to gooa an get a good *snuff-up* a purpose ta keep em waken dewrin t'sarvice. An tha see nearly all t'gret fooaks lives e D—t—n an t'subbubs; that's t'reason ha live thear, becos tha knos collears can look as big as ony-body else wen they dooant drink all they addle. An tha sees we've a sort of a parlement nah, en all t'parish offecers meet thear wunce a munth ta transakt bisniss of a theorecal carrakter.

SAM : Ha dooant understan the abaght parish offecers an sich. Why, thear nobbut ew's'd ta be a nod hoverseer, an he wor big enuff ta manage all t'job, an do a bit on his oun accant beside.

JOONAS : Ah lad, but things is differant nah. Tha sees t'parish is divided into four tawnships, en ivry tawnship sends three members ta D—t—n parlement, but sum fooaks calls em t'booard a helth, or t'belly-ache cummittee, an as thes generaly a few owd wimin gets among em, an they sit (eggs neerly) ivry munth, en toak abaght t'markets an t'price a flaar, trakle, nails, an sich like. Ther a grand lot ha'l assure the; thes ommast all soorts a trades but beesom-makkers an winder-shut grinders,—an sooa theeas constetutes t'belly-

ache booard—ha dooant meean t'belly-ache band, that's gooaan ta obliveon long sin; an tha knos thes fowr gooaas aght ivry year, members ha meean, an thes a fine to do for thes fowr fresh uns cums in if t'owd uns issent elekted ageean; an thes just as much fuss made at t'elekshun as ther is ore a member a parlement, an thes nooa little bobbin-windin gooin off among t'candidates an ther jack-olls. Tha'd be cap'd wi t'job an be reddy ta think thear must be a gret benefit in it; an bless the life, thes nowt at end on it but honor an glory, an a good rooad to ther awn haase. Nah, if they'd nobut do t'wark ther sent ta do, ha shud call em t'parish rooad menders, but its varry easy to tell wheor ony of em lives withaght axin, becos thes allas a cooach-rooad to ther plases an to ther shops an coil-pits anole. They kno ha ta handle booath t'parish brass an t'parish fooils.

SAM: My word, Joonas, tha wauks into em smart: tha dosent seem ta think ony gret things a yore moonshine parlement: but yo can send dacent men if yo like, can't yo? becos tha sees yove gotten hauseowd sufferige, an it shud mak sum difference e t'vooatin accant, beside makin a poor workin man into a little gentleman while t'vooatation lasts, an thes a lot a men runnin up an dahn e all derekshuns wi t'oil bottle an t'fether, sain—if you please will you vooate for sooa an sooa—he's the chap for good rooads en less rates, an thel bow en scrape to us wile thev getten ther men in, an then they laf e ther sleeves an says—wot a lot a spooneys wi hev ta deal wi; an they think reight anole, for thes plenty gets in at dursent say ther hats is ther awn. an hardly durst gape for feard a speikin. Wen thes owt goin on sich as spendin t'brass ets beein gethered e wun tawhship ta mak gooid rooads in anuther; an then ageean, wen ther maaths dus oppen, thes nowt can cum aght becos thes nowt in. But yov gotten a fresh lot in hevent yo? hes it's beein t'elekshun lately yol hev sum new blood surely.

JOONAS: Ah lad, but tha sees thes nobbut fowr nock'd off a t'shelf ivry year, an four fresh uns put on. If t'owd uns hesent wax enuf abaght em ta stick fast ta t'board; wev beein all reight at ar plase, but thes allas the hangmant to do wi em at M—p—l—ll, becos they can nivver get t'men in at they cud like, en ther ommast allis defeated en a nowd woman or two hes gotten in be mistack, an they hed sooa much weshin en menglin to do, thev hed plenty a wark withaght dooin men's wark e rooad mendin an sich, en shifting muckheaps en fillin up slap-hoils; an as for t'gutter-hoils them's all left oppan a purpose for t'midneet maantebanks ta perform in, an sooa as they can hev plenty a room e length, en plenty a room ta swell ther lungs in wile ther shaatin "Brittons nivver shall be slaves." But enah, theease M—p—l—ll fooaks begun a kickin (donkeys wil kick sumtimes wen ther hitten hard), an sooa t'members a t'local parlement went raand ta hev a look at theas newsances as they call em, en ta hev a gooid snuff-up at sum a t'perfewmeries, an as thear wor two or three a theas sent-bottle manefakteries ta meney, they wor struk off

a t'mop a wun part a t'tawn. Thes wun manefaktery ta abaght twenty haases, 'en its a bit a gooid fun ta see em waitin ther kale; but then tha knos at this sooart a thing el do for low-bred anemals; ther na better ta wate ther turn then donkeys is e Edinburgh, wear thes abaght haaf a duzen establishments for all t'tawn,—an they call thes sivilised cuntreys—fudge!

SAM: My word, Joonas, thas auther red a gooid deaal or travild a bit. But tha dosent mean ta say at ther owt like that e M—p—l—ll, dusta? If ha rekolekt reight it dident ewsd ta be sooa.

JOONAS: Happen not, but tha sees wi em hevin nowt but t'owd wimmin to represent em, they did varry weel for t'other members ta laff at, wile they wor droint t'orass aght a M—p—l—ll ta mak cooach rooads e t'uther tawnships; of coorse, ther aware at ony sooart a rooads is gooid enuff for nalemakers en kollears ta wauk on, that may be, but ha ar they ta do wen ther hisent a rooad at all. Why mun, thes a grand little place a t'slip side a M—p—l—ll they coll t' M—k—y P—k, an thear hisent a rooad to it, nor nivver wor, tho e fine dry wether they can mak a sooart of shift be gooin on a nowd lane et leeads to a stooan quarry, but tha ma understan this owd lane belongs ta nooab'dy, sooa nooab'dy al mend it, sooa tha ma hev a pretty gooid gess abaght it wen ha tell the t'lane hesent been reight mended for moor than a hundered en fifty year ta ma nolige, an thes a plenty a fooaks ets owder then me at can gooa deaal farther back e rooad mending, en at caant remember that lane iver hevin a barra full a checks on it; en tha sees e winter time its nowt but a long sluge pooand, en sooa thes sun tauk abaght em borrhoin t'kanell sluge booot en hevin it fettled aght, an then it al be summatt like t'grand kanell at Venis, en then all t'fooaks e t'park el be able ta paddle his awn canoo, en mak hissen beleeeve t'M—k—y P—k wor t'city o the seea, en his canoo wor transmogrifide into a Gondola, en t'haases wor Pagoda's Pinicles en Pantheons.

SAM: Howd on a bit, Joonas, or else ha shl forgot wot ha want ta say. Tha puts me it mind a quaker B——'s candles; owd Sally Sumphoil went for her groaceres a bit sin, en wen he wor rekonin em up, shu says, stop, hes't candles risen? ah, lass, says he; ha's that? says shu; why ma lass, tha sees its owin ta t'war; blame ther necks, says Sally, ha dident kno at them Prewshons faight be candle leet;—sooa ha'm e thinkin thart a bit like candles, thas risen, en if ha cud speik like thee, ha'd raise mesen aght a t'coil pit; mun, thes nooa knoin whear thad get to if tha'd nobut look aght; thad sooin be e sum guverment hoffice, like me, en be gettin haaf-a-craan a day, en that's better nor brayin t'coil face for nowt in a bad hoil, en hev ta booit t'hurrier's wage, beside its worth summatt ta see t'cro's fly. But pray the gooa on, ha'm varry interested in the tauk. Dusta mean ta say at all t'rooads is elike abaght M—p—l—ll, en ha are they goin on wi t'muck heeaps, en is ther ony new bildins, en is ther ony moor ehapels en churches.

JOONAS : Nooa lad, t'roads hisent all elike, but a gret decal a that depends up a t'M.P. for t'taanship, as ta whear *he lives*, as ha'v sed befoor, if a stranger wanted ta kno whear a member lived, he'd hev nowt ta do but ta gooa till he got ta a bit a gooid rooad an a whooal cosey, an ha'l be bun for it he'l awther find a member or wun at hes been, just abaght thear : an ha dooant blame em so much for ha shud happen do t'same if ha wor e ther place. But they dooant do fair, they weeant gie us chaps a chance a gettin a seeat e t'parlementary booard. Thes nooab'dy mun ist theear but men a property ; it matters nowt abaght a munkey sittin up a t'rig, its all reight if t'property be e thare name, it dusent mean whooa it belongs to ; mun thes plenty on em at wares a tale ta ther name et hesent a coit collar ta call ther awn, an as for sum on em ther property's all moooinshine if they wor put into t'scales. An they gooa swellin up an daahn like sink-hooil tooads becos ther men a property,—an best on it is ther neearly all relegous men ; mun relegun is a varry convenient clooak for sum fooks, for it cuvers a multetude a sins, an tho its beein e gooa meney a year its not dun up yet : but tha ma allas see t'hoil whear t'tale cums thru. If ta caant see t'cloven feet, an theeas is t'men at fills t'parish hoffices, an sits ta dooal aght t'brass wots been left ta them at dusent bother t'parish for reeleef, an if a woman wi five or six little children en a hard workin husband gooas ta ax for her reights, they'd say—yore husband's e gooid wark, wev nowt for yo : an shu's happen berred fowr childer e fowr weeks, just befoor, an niver axt em for a penny ; then wun wi a bit moor humanity then t'uthers al put his hand in his pocket an gie her a shillin, an he feels all t'better for hevin dun sich a benevolent akshun, an shul feel no worse for thankin him for such a splendid display a humanity. Nah, mind the, ha'v nooa objekshuns a men sittin e caansel en despensin reeleef an sich : ha say men ats gained sich a position thru ther awn honest industry, ther a credit ta t'cuntry they live in ; but wen they gain ther position be left-handed honesty, t'reight hand weeant work for uthers na moor nor it will for thersens. Nah ha think tha sed summat abaght bildins : mun thev gotten two grand uns e t'city ; thev a grand chapel an a little twig off a ar owd muther church, but tha knos it el grow nooa daght, an sooiner it grows into a church an better, for thes sum a t'chapels ommast grown aght a ther clooaze en wants lettin aght a bit,—an ha'm not goin ta say thes ought varry grand abaght t'owd lass, for shu'l nooan be sa varry long befoor shu wants a *crutch*, for shu's nearly lamed heesen wi gettin in t'state crops, en wisikin t'owd doktrin aght a t'constetewshan.

SAM : Thank the, Joonas, en ha wooap t'owd clooak sistem an sich el be a hint for me, but ha shil hev ta leave the sooin becos tha sees ha'm wanted e t'office, for ha'm expectin a telegraf mesege thru Pudsy abaght t'sun gooin e t'clips t'thurty seckand a t'next month. Tha sees ha'v all t'kalkelashuns ta mak for t'benefit a ivrybody et wants liftin up e t'scale a filosofecal en siantifick nolige. But ha'v anuther question ta ax the : dusta think thes ony tarifen goin on abaght M—p —l—ll nah days?

JOONAS : Bewtefull, bewtefull, bewtefull star ! Tha mun excuse Sam, ha feel sooa elevated wi t'question tha's axt ; why mun, t'plaice wudent a beein haaf as big as it is if it hedent a beein for them chaps. Mun, thes hardley owt can be dun withaght em, an as sooin as they get shut a ther *dubbles*, an sprang up into maturnety, ther made into hoverseers,

rooad-menders, booard-a-helth men, an gardeons, &c., an ther t'reight men for sich jobs (whear ther wanted), becos ther so much acquainted wi t'jack, ha meean t'screw-jack. They screw t'n—l—s aght a ther workmen at a gret profit, en they mak em tak stuff for em, en they screw a gret profit aght a that, en then they screw anuther gret profit aght a t'fooks at buys t'n—l—s,—tha sees its ommast all profit. Thal hev red abaght them owd villans e former days, et made use a t'thum screws an t'irun collars—why mun, thes sum a theeas tarifmen (ha dooant say abaght here) neerly as bad, en best on it is they neerly all ware t'owd clooak at ha'vmenshund befoor. Why its nobut a few weeks sin ha wor reedin abaght sum a theeas things, en if ha ma speik me mind, ha shud say ther the mooast detestable anemals et crnlls on *God's earth*. Ha beleeve e t'owd English motto, "Pay en be paid," en that e gooid English coin, en not e soft soop en rees'd bacon. Ha heeard a man say, an he's nother deead nor sick yet, at he worked for wun a theeas dogberres fowr years, en all t'Queen's coin at iver he drawd thru doggy wor the magnifecent sum of wun penny, en that wor same as droin his blood. Nah, ha'm not gooin ta say theeas chaps is all elike, nooan sooa, thes sum on em pays ther workmen e hard cash, en alles hes dun, en pays em weel, en ther a honor to t'plaice en a credit to t'cuntry they live in, en ther haases hesent a munkey cock'd up a t'rig long together, en t'stooan hisent daubed wi *red* marks. Nah wen them men dees thel stan a better chance nor t'uther lot, for thel hev less bad wark ta think abaght, an may Tommy shops en Johnny shops like Shakespeare's baseless fabriks of a vision, be swept away nor leeave a wreck behind.

SAM : My stars, Joonas, they ar fine words them, but ha can't say at ha kno Mester Shakespeare, but mooast likely tha dus ; but as for t'uther sistem ha thowt it worent *lo* ta pay a man his wages e soop an candles an sich asteead a brass.

JOONAS : Na moore it hisent. If theeas poor men ed just stan a ther feet an say British coin for British work, it ed be dun, but they ma all be in a mind tha knos, but wile they submit to be trodden on, t'uther lot al set t'*lo* at defiance, but ha beleeve t'day hisent far off wen this clap-trap sistem al be dun away wi, an a man al be paid for his wark e British coin, en loocal boARDS al be men a *stuff* asteead a men a *puff* ; but ha see thart gettin fidgety, sooa ha'l bid the good neet, en wel hev a bit moor tauk sumtime else.

NATHAN NIPCRUST.